STAR WARS™

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39

JENDIRIAN VALLEY AA-9 STARFREIGHTER

Refugees' transport from Coruscant to Naboo

Padmé's father Jobal

Naboo lakeside retreat

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STAR WARS

"WE WENT INTO LIGHTSPEED A WHILE AGO."
"I LOOK FORWARD TO SEEING NABOO AGAIN."

PADMÉ AMIDALA AND ANAKIN SKYWALKER

During the Separatist Crisis that plagued the Old Republic, many of the freighters that plied the space routes to and from Coruscant were quickly converted as their owners sought to cash in on the needs of the desperate and dispossessed. One such ship was the AA-9 starfreighter *Jendirian Valley*.

THE AA-9 STARFREIGHTER

GALACTIC WORKHORSE

Coruscant was not a self-sufficient planet. It relied on imported food, imported raw materials, even imported labour, and exported very little – save for culture, fashion and politics. Keeping the planet from starving were a constant stream of starfreighters, including the huge AA-9s.

Built by the Botajef Shipyards, the AA-9 freighters were gigantic, 1200m long haulers that were a common sight in ports across the galaxy. Rugged, basic and hugely reliable, these were bulk freighters in the truest sense – little more than a big empty hold with the bridge at one end and the engines at the other. Configured so that they could easily be modified by their owners to handle pretty much any cargo, the AA-9s meant that the Botajef Shipyards offered the only serious competition to the virtual dominance of the Corellian Engineering Corporation in the field of modular-design starfreighters. While the AA-9s couldn't compete with the Trade Federation's enormous 3000m long *Lucrehulk*-series freighters, those were not freely available for purchase, and were pressed into service as warships at the time of the Separatist Crisis.

Back to Basics

As standard, the AA-9 freighters were fitted with a trio of Dyne-2577 sublight engines mounted on the rear of the vessel. This area of the ship formed what amounted to a self-contained engineering section isolated from the cargo, passenger and crew areas. While this feature was a fluke of construction, it did have the significant bonus that anything short of catastrophic problems with the engines would not affect the cargo. Most AA-9 owners kept the reliable, original sublight engines. Hyperdrives were another matter, as the off-the-shelf hyperdrive for the AA-9 was a painfully slothful class 6 rating. Any operator who wanted to run at a profit would upgrade to a better unit at the first opportunity.

Back to Basics

The bridge of the AA-9 sat high on the very front of the ship, its six large viewports offering unobstructed vision ahead for the crew. Depending on how much care and monitoring the cargo took, that crew could number as few as around 20 beings – many of the AA-9s standard systems were automated to make running the vessel as cheap as possible. Large viewports ran down the front of the ship and smaller ones were set along both lateral ridges. The lateral bulges were designed to hold small cargo units or, with a little conversion, could be used for additional crew quarters or as economy transport for unfussy travellers. These areas were accessed through docking ramps. However, any really big cargo was loaded into the central sections through massive doors set along the top of the ship and along the keel. The internal decking could be easily reconfigured to carry any shape and size of container, making the AA-9 a very flexible transport solution.

ESCAPING CORUSCANT

SENATORIAL REFUGEE

After two attempts on her life on Coruscant, Senator Padmé Amidala reluctantly accepted the advice of the Jedi Council and of Chancellor Palpatine. She would leave Coruscant and return to Naboo with Anakin Skywalker as her bodyguard. However, one challenge remained: how to leave undetected?

For the Senator and her Jedi protector, the answer to the problem of leaving Coruscant incognito proved to be a simple one. With the galaxy engulfed in the Separatist Crisis, Coruscant was awash with refugees seeking transport to new worlds. When planets and sometimes whole systems left the Republic and joined the Separatists, those who wished to stay in the Republic had little choice but to leave if they could. The Refugee Relief Movement did what it could, organising transports to take some of the displaced to peaceful worlds such as Alderaan or Naboo.

Cramped Quarters

The AA-9 starfreighter *Jendirian Valley* was one of a number of ships hired by the Refugee Relief Movement and its mission was to carry the more fortunate unfortunates to a new life on Naboo. The starfreighter's middle decks had been converted – albeit somewhat hurriedly and extremely haphazardly – to carry some 30,000 refugees. Watched by a few surly 'steerage overseers' hand-picked by the captain, the refugees lived in cramped, improvised quarters that offered little by way of comfort or privacy. Eating in shifts, passengers were fed by COO-2180 – a grumpy

"Keep moving! Keep moving! Hey! No droids!"

Food server

Industrial Automaton cook droid, who catered for his charges using pre-packaged emergency rations and other donated supplies.

No Mere Trampers

The captain of the *Jendirian Valley* was known to be a soft touch with trampers – the name adopted with some pride by semi-nomadic workers who tramped the galaxy from one job to another. He would have been honoured to know that he had carried none other than Senator Amidala and her Jedi guardian. Slipping unnoticed onto the ship, accompanied by the astromech R2-D2, the two travelled to Naboo without attracting much attention – though they did save the desperate human refugee Nar Hida from making a fatal mistake and robbing an armed, sleeping Bith.

ANAKIN SKYWALKER

ACT OF REBELLION

Taken on as Padawan by Obi-Wan Kenobi at the request of his dying Master, and with the reluctant acceptance of the Jedi Council, Anakin Skywalker's time in the Temple was never going to be simple – if a Jedi's life could ever be such a thing.

Obi-Wan's promise to Qui-Gon bound him to Anakin but the determined defiance he showed Yoda on Naboo sustained him only so far. Obi-Wan's own self-doubts, coupled with Anakin's age, independent streak, and increasing arrogance often drove a wedge between Master and Padawan. Years later, having surrendered his physical form to Darth Vader's lightsaber, Obi-Wan would tell Anakin's son, Luke, that he'd believed he could train Anakin, but admitted he'd been wrong. However, Kenobi took too much of the blame on himself. Despite everything, Obi-Wan and Anakin had been friends and brothers-in-arms at a most terrible time. In taking Anakin as apprentice, Obi-Wan Kenobi had unknowingly been set against a hidden dark force determined to corrupt or destroy his promising Padawan.

Shadow of the Dark Side

Young Anakin Skywalker's potential was beyond question – so much so as to unnerve the Jedi Council. However, once the decision was made to train Anakin, the Jedi Order welcomed him with open arms. But Yoda's concerns about Anakin's attachments – particularly to his mother – would return to haunt all who knew Anakin. In the meantime, Anakin learned fast. He excelled in his early training, quickly matching and exceeding his peers. Unfortunately, this presented its own difficulties. Anakin was already set apart from a generation of Jedi, thanks to his late entry to the Order. His sudden rise from oft-berated slave to regularly praised Jedi-Saviour-to-be distanced him yet more from those around him. Luckily, Anakin had a mentor outside the Order, who was always ready to offer advice or guidance, and to reassure him that he was destined for greatness. Chancellor Palpatine was watching Anakin with great interest…

"Anakin was a good friend. I took it upon myself to train him as a Jedi. I thought I could instruct him just as well as Yoda. I was wrong." Obi-Wan

PROFILE

Anakin Skywalker

Species
Human

Homeworld
Tatooine

Height
1.85 metres

Affiliation
Jedi Order

Training and Temptation

Though Anakin and Obi-Wan did bond, it was not really as Master and Padawan. Rather, Anakin considered Obi-Wan the father he had never had, with all the associated positives and negatives. What didn't help was that, unknown to all, Chancellor Palpatine was stoking Anakin's ego. If Anakin was reprimanded by Master Kenobi, Palpatine was there to assure the petulant boy that he had been right. Ultimately, Anakin came to believe that he was superior to his Masters. As his training progressed, the growing boy found little to challenge this. Two incidents when Anakin was about 14 served to distance him further from Obi-Wan. First, he and Kenobi disagreed in their opinion of self-declared Jedi Master Jorus C'baoth. Later, on a quest to locate a senator's missing son, Obi-Wan berated Anakin for a perceived failure in an otherwise successful mission. As always, Palpatine was there to reassure Anakin of his greatness and destiny, so any lessons were missed.

Attachments

Ten years since they had last met, just after he had turned 20, events threw Anakin Skywalker and Padmé

"You were the Chosen One! It was said that you would destroy the Sith, not join them! Bring balance to the Force, not leave it in darkness!" Obi-Wan

The Chosen One?

A Jedi prophecy – its origin lost in antiquity – spoke of a Chosen One of great ability who would bring balance to the Force. Qui-Gon Jinn believed he had discovered the Chosen One, but when Anakin fell to the dark side and became Darth Vader, it seemed that he was wrong. However, the will of the Force moves in subtle ways. When Anakin's son brought Vader back from the dark side, Anakin destroyed the Emperor and fulfilled the ancient prophecy. The Sith were vanquished, if only for a while.

Amidala together again. Now Senator for Naboo, Padmé had suffered a number of attempts on her life. During the last, Anakin had directly saved her life. Reluctantly, Padmé had agreed to return to Naboo, accompanied by Anakin and disguised as a refugee aboard the AA-9 starfreighter *Jendirian Valley*. From the moment they met again, there was a noticeable spark of more than rekindled friendship between the Padwan and the young Senator – each as rebellious and headstrong as the other. Thrown together in such close proximity, thanks in part to the machinations of Palpatine, their feelings threatened to overwhelm them. Only Padmé's dedication to duty, however reluctant in this case, prevented her from giving in to Anakin and to her own feelings. Padmé travelled to Tatooine with Anakin when nightmares about his mother, Shmi, drove him there. Shmi had been kidnapped by Tusken Raiders, and died despite Anakin's best efforts. His rage, not for the first time, drove him to kill. The massacre of an entire Tusken clan was felt by Jedi on Coruscant. The repercussions of the killings were put to one side as Anakin and Padmé went to Obi-Wan's rescue on Geonosis. Events spiralled out of control and, even as the Clone Wars erupted, Anakin and Padme came together in secret as husband and wife. It was this attachment that would drive Obi-Wan and Anakin apart, and finally give Palpatine the leverage to draw Anakin to the dark side as Darth Vader.

NABOO GONDOLA SPEEDER

HAND-CRAFTED ELEGANCE

The lakeside communities of Naboo were served by a variety of craft, many of which appeared distinctly anachronistic when compared when to the sleek lines of the Naboo starfighters. The hand-built gondola speeders were a different matter. Fast and relatively nimble, the speeder operated by Paddy Accu was a typical model.

The rivers and lakes of the planet Naboo were relatively important trade routes for a people determined to live in balance with their delicate environment. Slow-moving paddle-driven barges plied the waterways at a stately pace carrying cargo and passengers. Zipping between them, the plasma-powered gondola speeders carried no more than four or five people and small amounts of baggage. As with the barges, these were hand-crafted by craftspeople in the workshops of the communities they served. As a result, despite the boat builders working with many of the same components, there was no standard design to follow and each craft was an individual.

Varykino Variant

Paddy Accu was the caretaker of the Naberrie's family retreat at Varykino in the Naboo lake country. The gondola speeder he used to ferry the family to the island – the same one that took Padmé and Anakin to the retreat when the Senator was hiding out on Naboo – was a simple affair. Capable of a maximum speed of around 100km/h, with a two-metre flight ceiling, the gondola was a repulsorlift craft that doubled as a boat if necessary, or if desired by the passengers. A simple holographic display and steering handles were all Accu needed. Padmé had fond memories of the caretaker giving her and her friends gentle, spray-cooled trips around the lake in her carefree youth.

Gondola Speeder PROFILE

Type
Unique repulsorlift watercraft

Length
7.9 metres

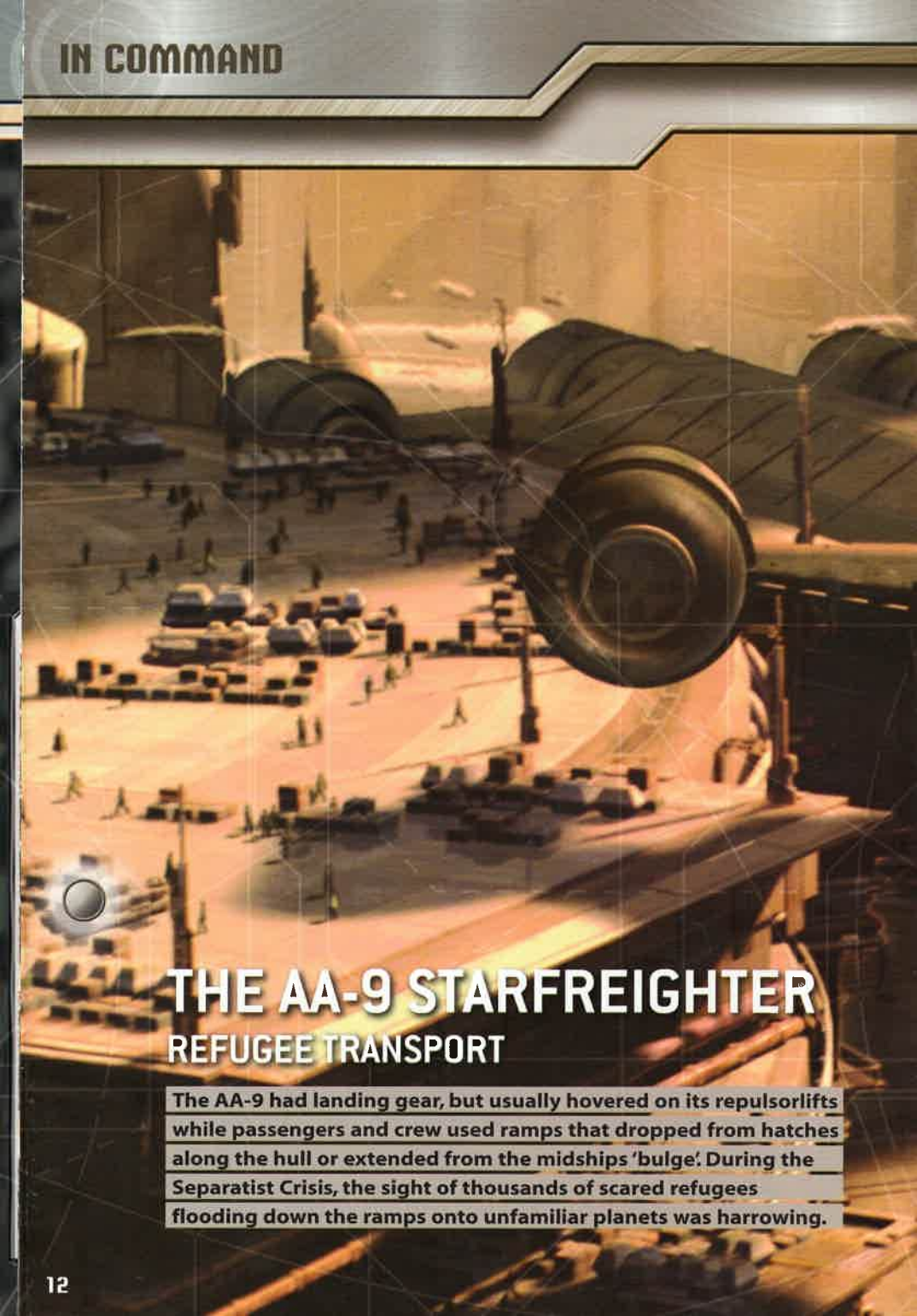
Crew
1 x pilot

Max. Speed
100km/h (in air)

Passengers
3

Weapons
none

Affiliation
Naberrie family



THE AA-9 STARFREIGHTER

REFUGEE TRANSPORT

The AA-9 had landing gear, but usually hovered on its repulsorlifts while passengers and crew used ramps that dropped from hatches along the hull or extended from the midships 'bulge'. During the Separatist Crisis, the sight of thousands of scared refugees flooding down the ramps onto unfamiliar planets was harrowing.

THE AA-9 STARFREIGHTER
JENDIRIAN VALLEY

Type
Modified Botajef AA-9 Cargo Freighter

Manufacturer
Botajef Shipyards

Length
1290 metres

Engines
3 x Corellian Engineering Corp. Dyne-2577 sublight engines

Dyne-2577 sublight engines

Hyperdrive Class
2.0 (6.0 backup)

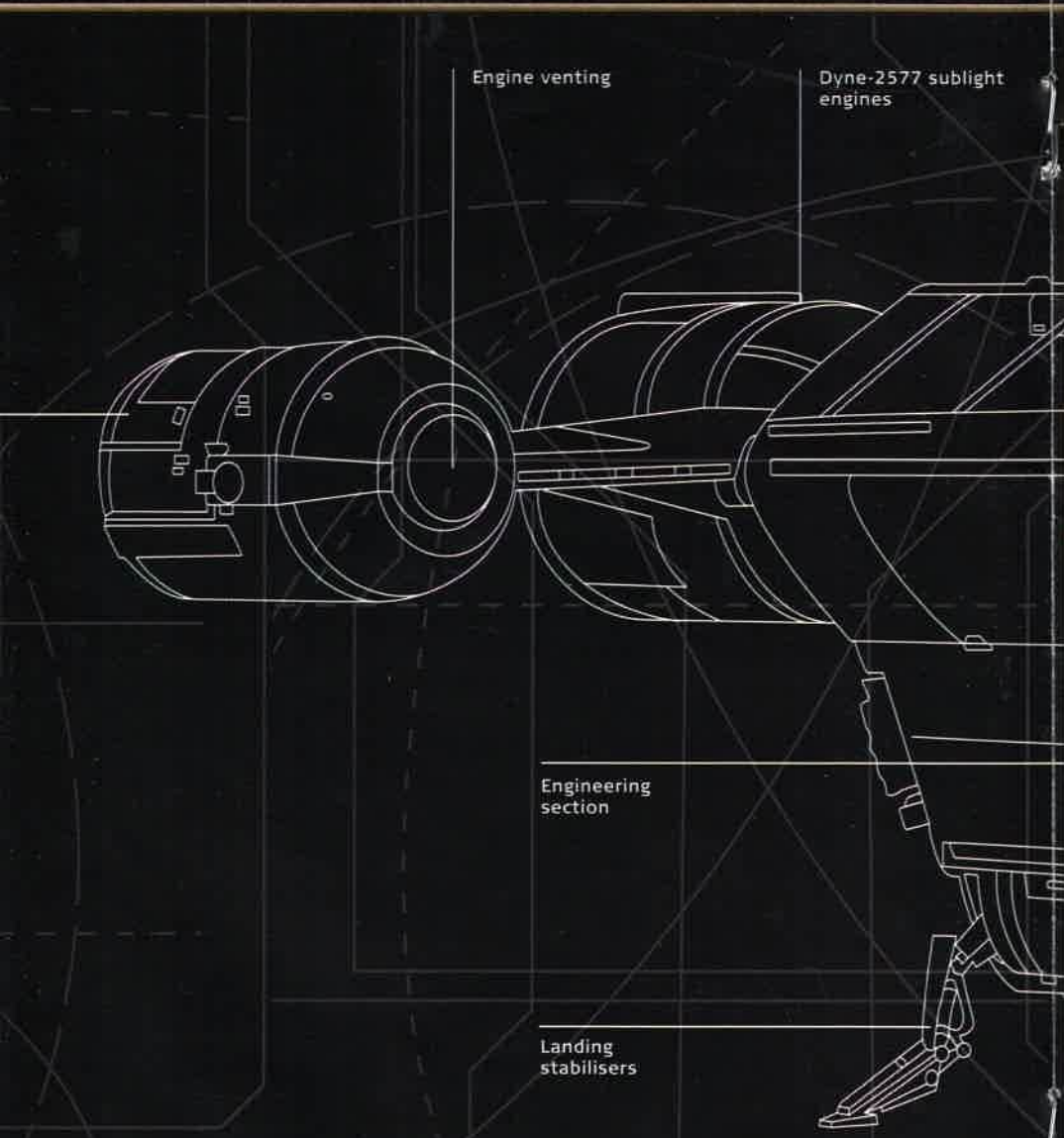
Weapons
None

Crew
50 (approx.)

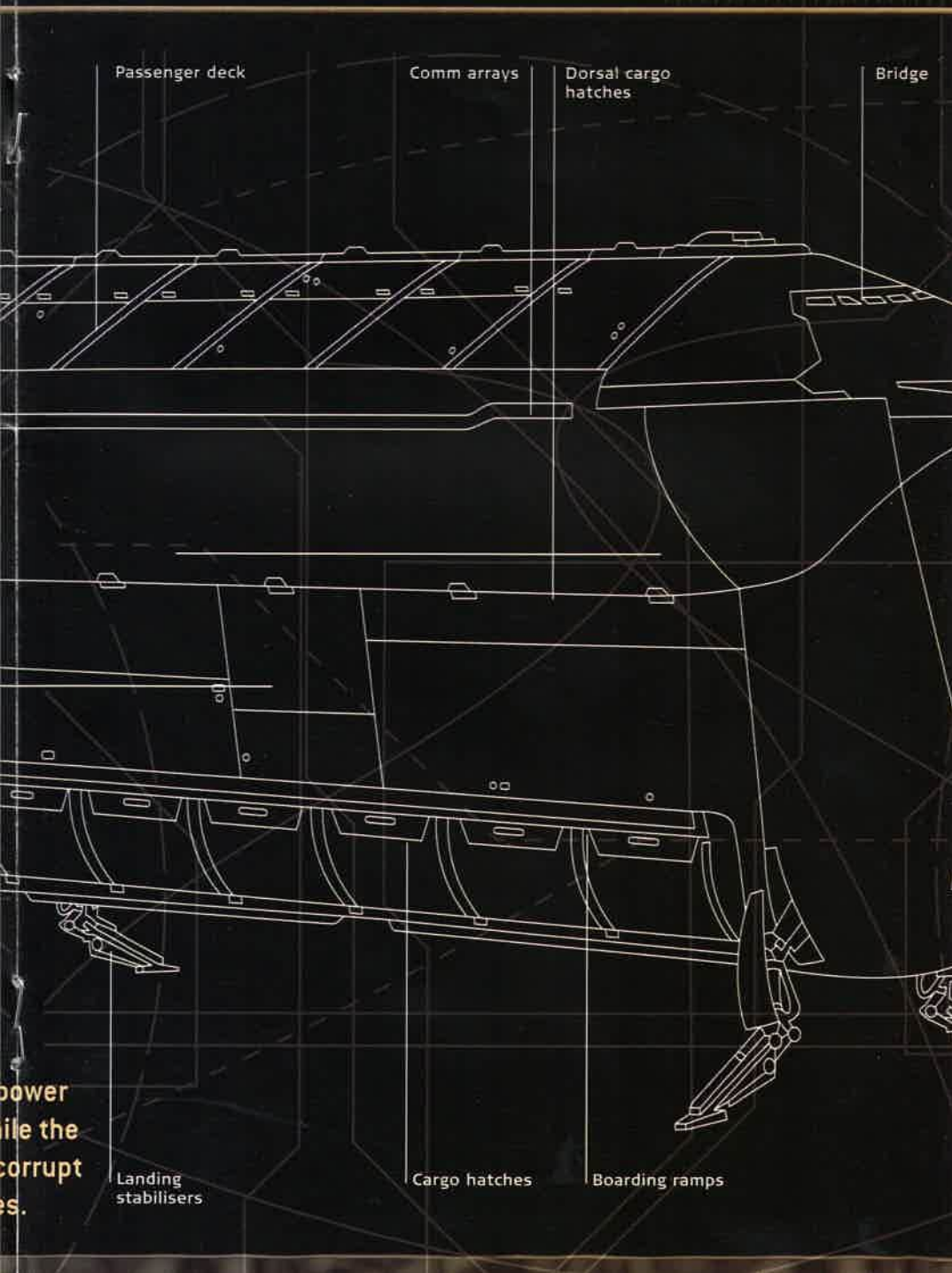
Passengers
30,000

Affiliation
Naboo Transport Guild, Refugee Relief Movement

Component Irony
The AA-9s used Dyne-2577 sublight engines. Ironically, these were manufactured by the Corellian Engineering Corp, whose own freighters were in direct competition with the AA-9.



The passenger quarters aboard converted AA-9s were so cramped and uncomfortable that owners often employed 'steerage overseers' with the po to throw unruly or thieving passengers off the ship at the nearest port. While overseers aboard the *Jendirian Valley* were relatively honest, many were co beings whose protection rackets added to the misery faced by the refugees.



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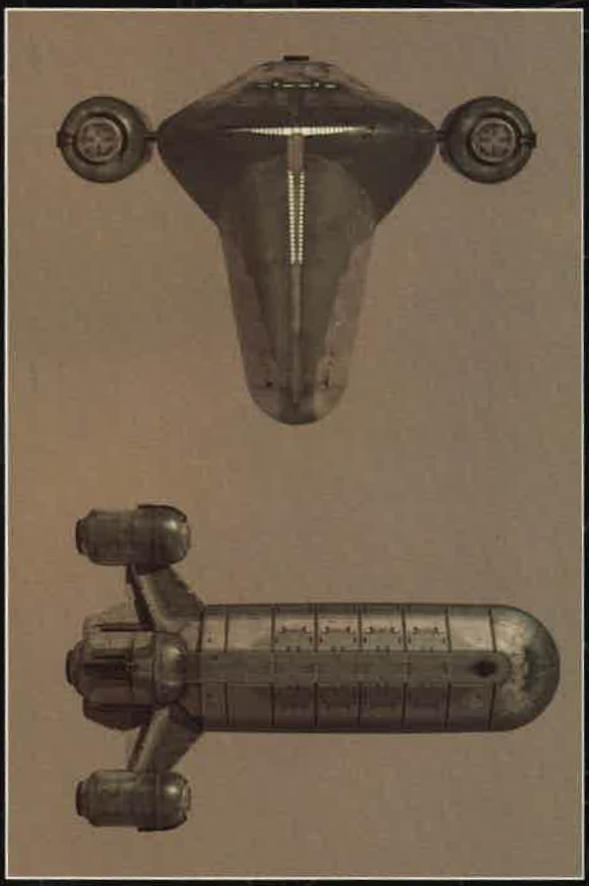
Forward view ports

Landing stabilisers



The Military Option

During the Clone Wars, when more appropriate vessels were not available, the Galactic Republic used hastily converted AA-9 cargo freighters as makeshift dropships to transport large numbers of troops and equipment to battlefields around the galaxy. Though fairly tough, these ships were given no additional armour and remained unarmed.

RUWEE NABERRIE

PADMÉ AMIDALA'S FATHER

To understand what inspired a young Padmé Naberrie to enter a life of demanding public service, historians need only look to the sterling example provided by her father, Ruwee. Born in a remote mountain village, he too answered the call of duty to his fellow beings.

Padmé Naberrie's grandmother Winama instilled the importance of compassion and selfless generosity in her children. As a result, Winama's son Ruwee was involved with the Refugee Relief Movement at a young age, learning the harsh lessons that the galaxy taught those willing to listen. Ruwee would often say that he appreciated that he and his family were fortunate in the gifts life had brought them, and that to help and share with others was the best way to say thank you. Idle enjoyment of one's own good fortune did not bring fulfilment in the same way.

Opportunities

Ruwee and his wife Jobal moved from their mountain home when their daughters Padmé and the older Sola were still young. Ruwee, a skilled master builder, knew that Theed would offer his children more opportunities. Sola found a simple life, marrying and raising a family of her own.

Padmé followed in her father's footsteps, joining the Refugee Relief Movement of which her father had eventually become President. Ruwee had even addressed the Galactic Senate from Senator Palpatine's platform, and had many influential friends. These included Rodian Senator Onaconda Farr, whom a young Padmé knew as Uncle Ono.

Tragedies

Ruwee followed Padmé's career closely, of course, and grew increasingly worried as she took on greater responsibility and faced greater dangers. His darkest fears were realised when, in the chaos of the Clone Wars, Padmé died. Ruwee, walking behind his daughter's coffin at her funeral, would never know his grandchildren, whom he had to say had died with their mother.

Missing The Cut

Ruwee Naberrie was played by Graeme Blundell in both Episodes II and III. In *Attack of the Clones*, his scenes saw Padmé bring Anakin to visit her family. While her mother and sister teased Padmé about Anakin, Ruwee took the young Jedi to one side to find out just how much danger she was in. These unfortunately deleted scenes were presented in the DVD release of Episode II. Ruwee is seen briefly during Padmé's funeral in Episode III.

PROFILE

Ruwee Naberrie

Homeworld

Naboo

Species

Human

Height

1.73 metres

Affiliation

Naboo

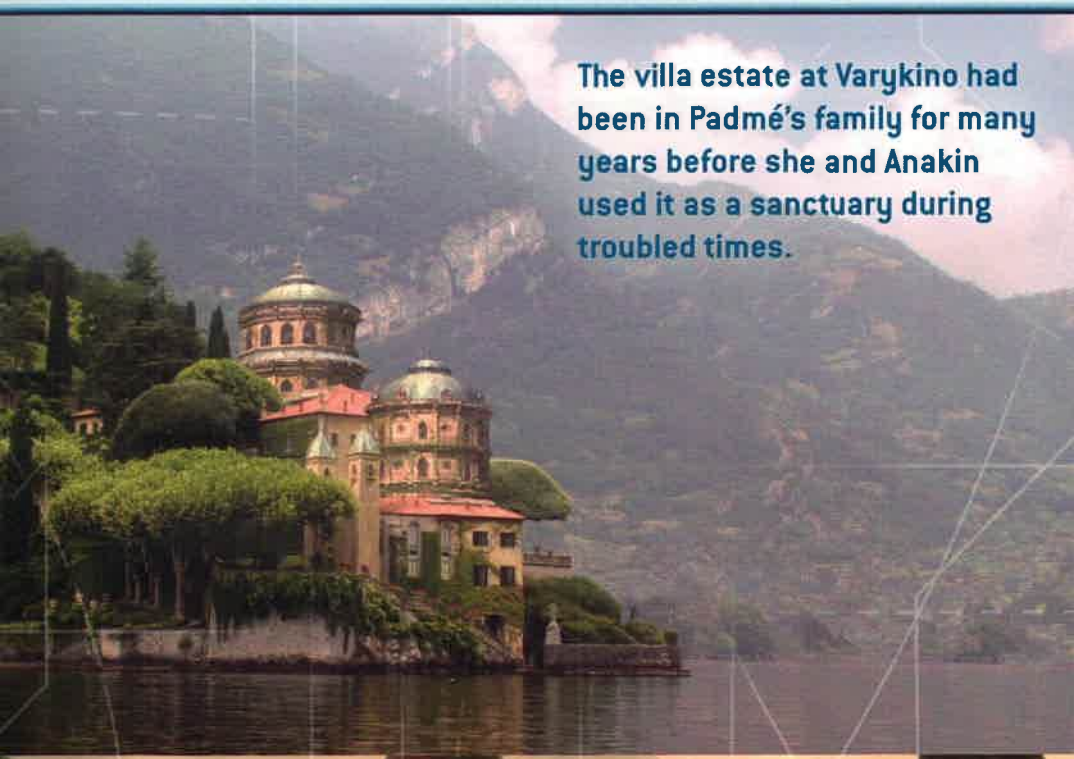
NABOO
THE LAKE COUNTRY

Nestling deep in the sparsely populated countryside of Naboo, the Lake Country was a uniquely beautiful area. Formed thanks to quirks of geology, the area's many lakes and rivers were safe and tranquil retreats for large numbers of the Naboo, including Padmé Amidala's family.

As Obi-Wan Kenobi and Qui-Gon Jinn discovered on their precipitous bongo ride through the planet core, the waterways of Naboo could be incredibly dangerous. Certainly, the Naboo communities had learned to treat rivers and lakes with wary respect. Fortunately, the rivers, lakes, ponds and waterfalls of the idyllic Lake Country were uniquely safe and secure. While they were fed from the same source as the rest of the planet, the Lake Country waterways were cut off from the more monstrous denizens of the Naboo fauna by the unique geology of the area.

Pastoral Perfection

Surrounded by mountains, the whole area of the Lake Country was a mass of flat water meadows, crystal lakes, meandering rivers, gentle streams, and fabulous waterfalls. Though the meadows flooded during certain seasons, the result was a wondrously fertile area providing rich grazing for flocks of shaak and other livestock, as well as sufficient agricultural land to feed the small communities of craft workers and farmers. The Pastoral Collective monitored the uses of the area, maintaining the environment and its delicate ecosystems. During the spring, one of the great festivals of the Naboo was held in the area. For the duration of the Festival of Glad Arrival, a celebration of the renewal of the year and the Naboo's pledge to protect the natural beauty of their world, the meadows were transformed by the colourful, musical pageants. All of this served to make the Lake Country a popular place for Naboo to come to for peace and relaxation; including the Naberrie family.



The villa estate at Varykino had been in Padmé's family for many years before she and Anakin used it as a sanctuary during troubled times.

"When I'm around you, my mind is no longer my own."

Anakin Skywalker

Unusual Request

A friend of the Naberrie family, Maxiron Agolerga was one of around twenty members of the small religious order the Brotherhood of Cognisance. Though none in the Brotherhood had conducted a wedding ceremony in some 300 years, two droids brought a request from a young woman calling herself Veré to do just that. Agolerga married Veré and Set at Varykino, only later discovering who they were.

Varykino Retreat

During her school days, Padmé Naberrie would visit the Varykino retreat with her family and friends. Even then, caretaker Paddy Accu would pick up the visitors in his gondola speeder and take them to the island on the shore of which was the magnificent villa. During the stay, Accu would give Padmé and her friends thrilling rides on the gondola, speeding over the water, or through the waves in a fountain of spray. Alternatively, the future Queen and her classmates would swim out to one of the smaller islands that dotted the lake, to lay on the beach while the sun dried them off.

Secret Marriage

All of these memories Padmé shared with Anakin Skywalker when they first stayed on Varykino, as they dined in the Room of Morning Mists – served by Teckla and Nandi Minnau – or spent time in the meadows on the mainland. Padmé and Anakin fell in love at Varykino. After the Battle of Geonosis, while Anakin recovered from his duel with Count Dooku, the Padawan and Senator were married in secret on a lakeside veranda by Maxiron Agolerga, Pontifex of the Brotherhood of Cognisance. The only witnesses were the droids, C-3PO and R2-D2.

THE PHANTOM MENACE

TRIALS IN TOZEUR

For *The Phantom Menace*, the *Star Wars* filmmakers returned to some old haunts in Tunisia to film the Tatooine sequences. A crew nearly 100 strong flew out weeks before filming began. Waiting for them was some horribly familiar weather.

By the time director George Lucas arrived to begin filming the Tatooine sequences in July of 1997, the set-up crew had been working flat out at a remote location on the edge of the Sahara, 25 miles away from Tozeur. Despite an average temperature of 55°C, the advance guard had established a tent base camp and had built six large sets – including the sprawling Mos Espa streets. "It was not a place where you could bring Winnebagos and trailers" recalls producer Rick McCallum. The filming near Tozeur would revisit many locations familiar to *Star Wars* fans, as well as the cast and crew, including the valley where Luke was attacked by Sand People, and the area where the Mos Eisley settlement sequences were filmed.

Desert Disaster

The first two days of filming went well, despite the high temperatures. However, on the evening of the third day, the crew encountered echoes of a fateful day – Friday 26 March 1976. Then, a huge rain storm swamped the crew, while high winds tore apart the Lars homestead and the Jawa sandcrawler. In 1997, 120 mile-an-hour winds, torrential rains, and a sand storm crashed down on the Lucasfilm tent village, and the *Star Wars* sets, props, costumes and filming equipment bore the brunt of the fury. Wet sand had buried many of the costumes. Podracer engines had been torn apart, scattered by the wind along with landspeeders and droids. The set buildings, made of wood and plaster, had crumbled.

"In a perverse sense, the

Them Bones, Them Bones, They Lie Around

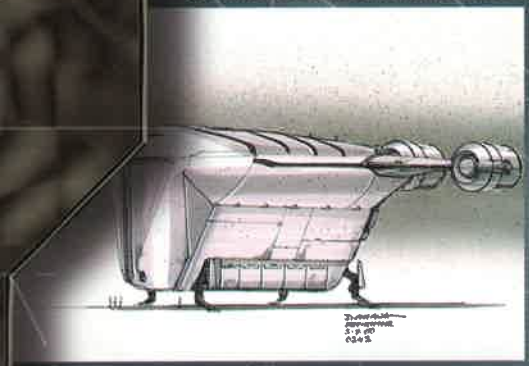
In the sand dunes around Nefta in Tunisia lie the bleached bones of a greater krayt dragon, there since 1976. While Episode II was being filmed, some of the crew went searching for them and discovered that they still remain – the weirdest of fossils.

sandstorm was fun", McCallum mused, much later. "The entire crew had to quickly pull together and improvise. The adrenaline was rushing through everybody's veins, and soon an almost military feeling overtook the set. Creature designers and cameramen worked to dig equipment out of the sand. Make-up artists and caterers worked to patch together shelter from the sun. And we didn't lose a day of shooting." Even George Lucas felt good about the whole event, as Rick McCallum remembered. After all, the 1976 storm hadn't stopped the first *Star Wars* film. "That film went on to spectacular success, so George figured that the devastation and destruction this time was actually a good

THE AA-9 STARFREIGHTER

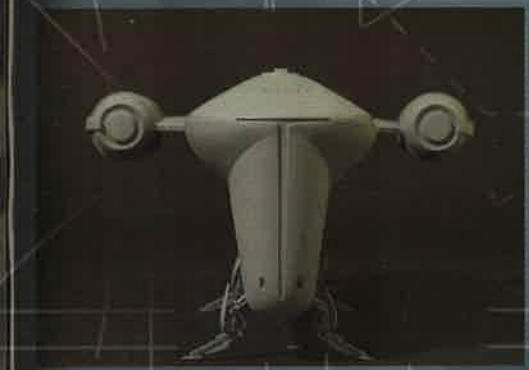
BUILDING THE REFUGEE SHIP

CREATING THE STARFREIGHTER

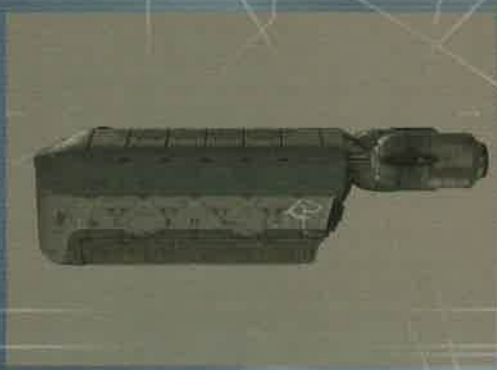


1 The final concept design by Doug Chiang. "George had the idea of boarding the midlevel, as with an ocean liner", Chiang remembers.

2 A concept design of the interior of the ship, imagining it as a vast empty space roughly converted for the needs of the refugees.



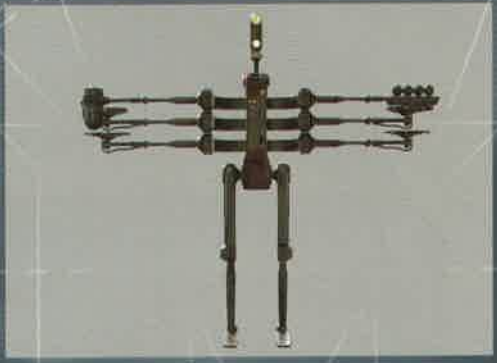
5 Front view of a production reference model for the exterior of the ship, showing the landing gear.



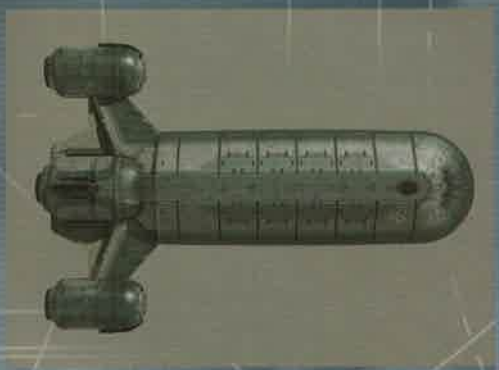
6 A side view of the final computer-generated model of the AA-9 freighter.

The Coruscant spaceport from which Anakin and Padmé leave for Naboo was imagined as being a huge structure at the centre of Coruscant. Concept work was done by Kurt Kaufman, but key to imparting a sense of scale to the whole structure was the cavernous converted starfreighter that the fugitives would board.

3 The set for the interior of the AA-9 under construction. Scenes between Padmé and Anakin set on the boarding ramp were cut due to time.



4 The computer-generated cook droid from the *Jendirian Valley*, which was required to interact with the other characters.



7 The top of the starfreighter, showing the division between cargo space and engineering area.

8 The underside of the AA-9 *Jendirian Valley*, again showing how the engines form a separate section.

DID YOU KNOW?

1 What was the inspiration behind the passenger boarding ramps of the AA-9 starfreighter?

2 Who created Padme Amidala's wardrobe in Episode II?

3 What happened on 28 July 1997?

ANSWERS:

1. Classic ocean liners were the inspiration for the mid-level passenger boarding ramps.

2. Ian McCaig, Tricia Biggar and Dermot Power designed Padmé's wardrobe.

3. In the evening of 28 July 1997, a huge sand storm and torrential rain tore through the Mos Espa set and the film crew tent village. The shooting schedule was modified by Rick McCallum to allow the crew time to repair the damage. As a result, no filming days were lost.

O

Oola

Character
Episode VI

Daughter of a Twi'lek clan chief on Ryloth, Oola was one of the best dancers of her generation. Trained at one of the foremost dance schools on her homeworld, the naïve young Twi'lek and her friend Sienn'rha were invited to Tatooine to dance at the palace of a great lord. Sienn'rha was rescued by Luke Skywalker, but the Jedi could not convince Oola to escape with her friend. As a result, Bib Fortuna brought her to Jabba the Hutt. The depraved crime lord took an instant liking to Oola, chaining her to his throne. Too late, Oola realised her plight, hoping for escape, rescue or a clean death. C-3PO told her that Luke was coming to rescue him. With hope in her heart, Oola danced on, but she refused Jabba's advances. Enraged, he fed the unfortunate girl to the rancor.

Opee sea killer

Creature
Episode I

Hybrid fish/crustaceans, the opee were the most numerous of Naboo's more dangerous sub-aqua predators. The 20m adults were the third largest carnivorous creatures in the the planet's underground tunnels and deeper lakes. Male opee carried the developing eggs, forcing them to abstain from food for up to three months. Newborn opee were an immediate threat to smaller prey, including incautious swimmers. Opee often hunted passively, clinging to rocky outcrops and waiting for prey to swim past. Their sticky tongue could flick out and grab passing food, dragging it back to the toothsome, gaping jaws.

Ordo, Canderous

Character
Expanded Universe

A member of Clan Ordo, Canderous was one of the most promising Mandalorian warriors of his time, becoming a battle tactician in the Neo-Crusaders for Mandalore the Ultimate. Canderous was a commander in the Mandalorian army that invaded the Republic nearly 4,000 years before the Battle of Yavin. He led his forces in many successful attacks, razing whole planets when he deemed it necessary. Though the Mandalorians were finally defeated, Canderous saw no loss of honour in being beaten by Revan, the leader of the Republic's forces. He would later work with Revan, now a Dark Lord of the Sith, to escape a Sith blockade on Taris and in the search for the Star Forge. Canderous would eventually lead his people as Mandalore the Preserver.

Ord Mantell

Planet
Expanded Universe

The Mid Rim world of Ord Mantell was settled by Corellian colonists some 12,000 years before the Battle of Yavin. During the days of the Old Republic, it had a reputation for being lawless, its corrupt government allowing the planet to become a haven for anyone with the credits to pay to be left alone. While with the Rebel Alliance, Han Solo was twice attacked by bounty hunters on Ord Mantell, once just before the Battle of Hoth.

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